have some established way, in a code not quickly recognized by the enemy, of giving its strength, location, and situation. But the ideal seldom prevails in combat, and Captain ----'s first-person message was probably delivered with Germans almost literally breathing down his neck.

And how about the receivers of his message? Those of us with the battalion commander were so elated when the captain said "I am in the town" that we didn't do what a combat staff must do—which is to be skeptical. We were too quick to assume that he was there with his whole company. We all happily agreed with the battalion commander's decision to move our ragtag headquarters unit forward and to get Company E in there to support Captain ---- and his "company."

And what about Captain ----'s action in moving into the village with only six men? No doubt it was a brave, bold action, worthy of recognition for an individual soldier. But he was not an individual soldier; he was a company commander. Once he detached himself with those six men, he could no longer do his proper job. Lacking a command focus, the company, already mauled, disintegrated into squad and platoon fragments, unable to maintain anything close to company effectiveness.

There is a long-winded old saying concerning a battle that was lost "for want of a nail," because the horse that was also lost was carrying the commander whose presence could have made the difference between victory and defeat. In this small action on the Roer River, it was not a nail that was lost but a pronoun—or rather the *meaning* of a pronoun, which had been mistakenly used and wrongly interpreted.

Moral: If you command anything more than yourself, be very careful when you say "I."

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Bridging Differences

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Training to fight in combined operations alongside our allies and friends is a necessity in almost every theater of operation and throughout the spectrum of conflict, from low intensity to high.* There are naturally some challenges associated with this coalition.

General Dwight Eisenhower, for example, had the monumental task of pulling together the Western Allies during World War II. Fortunately, in the desperate situation in which they found themselves, all the participants realized that without their mutual cooperation, the war would be lost.

By contrast, today's world often lacks a clearly definable threat that would compel friendly nations to work together. (The NATO alliance and our commitment in Korea may be the exceptions.) In particular, the developing countries are being threatened by conflicting internal interests as well as being wooed by various external factions in a highly unstable political atmosphere.

Because of its global economic and political interests, and its stature as a key defender of freedom, the United States is frequently involved in worldwide challenges. Additionally, the U.S. cannot refuse to respond to those who would strike at its vital interests, and when it does respond, the armed forces are often the principal actors.

The commitments U.S. armed forces must fulfill in NATO, Korea, and elsewhere require them to work, train, and if necessary fight alongside forces from widely diverse nations and cultures. There are specific challenges involved in these commitments, challenges that all leaders, down to the lowest levels, at least need to be aware of. First, however, some general observations should be noted regarding existing agreements and the overall mindset governing the United States' participation in coalition arrangements.

For one thing, there may already be certain treaties, status-of-forces agree-

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ments, or other host nation arrangements that outline the conduct of the relationships between U.S. and foreign units. They are just that, however--merely outlines. There remains a need, at the grass roots level, for positive action to formulate the kind of friendly psychological environment that is conducive to teamwork between differing peoples.

A second observation is that when the United States cooperates with and assists others, it often serves its own interests as well. A more stable and secure international environment fosters peaceful competition and furthers the security and prosperity the American people seek. All too often, however, we see examples of Americans who belittle their allies and friends as "takers," even in the open forum of the press. These editorial opinions are often misconstrued as official policy and destroy any cooperative spirit. They also undermine the accomplishment of the national objective we have set for a given area.

The specific challenges associated with combining allies and friends in a collective security effort (which is the basis of the term "combined operations") may arise out of differences in a number of areas--in doctrine, in equipment, and in culture. Concurrently, to succeed in countering the problems inherent in these areas of concern, certain supporting behavior patterns must be recognized and developed: understanding, communication, and mutual respect. These positive behavioral qualities must be applied constantly in an effort to solve the common problems experienced at the tactical and working level of combined operations.

At Grafenwoehr, U.S. troops join German troops in a defensive training drill.

DOCTRINE

One major challenge that arises when working with the armed forces of other nations is varying doctrine, or the fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of objectives.

The armed forces of different countries develop their doctrine on the basis of a combination of their perceived threat, their history, their resources, and their national objectives. This doctrine outlines the way their military forces train and forms the basis for their force structure. We can no more expect our friends and allies to change their basic philosophical or doctrinal positions than they would expect us to change ours. An open mind, a knowledge of the other nation's doctrine, and a willingness to work around divergent issues all lead to the mutual refinement in tactical viewpoints that is required for successful operations.

Experiences by members of U.S. security assistance organizations in foreign countries reveal that they had to learn a great deal about how the established system operated before they could bring about any effective change. But change is not necessarily the primary objective. The ultimate goal is to mesh seemingly opposite tenets into a viable tactical response.

Another challenge is the equipment differences that can cause various technical problems. The ultimate solutions to these interoperability issues normally exceed the capability of leaders at the tactical level. Nevertheless, these leaders should be aware of this problem area and seek assistance from technical specialists. Recognizing foreseeable equipment difficulties early can alert top leaders on both sides to the need to seek workable solutions.

The exchange of liaison teams may be the answer to some of these problems, because the teams provide not only coordination but also the necessary technical expertise regarding the employment of equipment.

The final and more fundamental area of challenge is that of culture. This is the most complex and the hardest to define in terms of the differences because it deals with the intangible products of common heredity and tradition. Ultimately, it is also the most important and, particularly on the tactical level, directly affects the ability of the U.S. to mount combined operations to achieve its objectives in specific areas of the world.

When compared to the armed forces of other free world countries, those of the U.S. often seem to have more abundant resources for the conduct of operations and training. Coupled with our quest for perfection in mission accomplishment, this apparent abundance of resources can create situations during exercises in which U.S. forces appear to steamroll their allies and friends.

Our counterparts, because of their day-to-day, real world commitments, often have limited time in which to pre-

pare for training. The U.S., on the other hand, can task individual action agencies and give them the luxury of working for an extended period on little more than planning one upcoming combined exercise. With such overwhelming capabilities, we are able to "Americanize" situations with our capacity to support and the emphasis we can place on an exercise. Such actions tend to highlight our friends' limited resources and represent the U.S. as a "big brother" who overpowers his smaller partners. These images can result in gradually distancing our allies from us.

The development of interpersonal relationships is a primary cultural concern. Truly effective coordination between different cultures depends upon the personal ties formed between counterparts rather than status-of-forces agreements made at the national level. Such ties cannot be made overnight, though. It takes months and sometimes years to foster the confidence and mutual trust required to coordinate combined exercises and war plans successfully.

Liaison officers, again, are the key. They should be assigned early and the same ones should stay, not only through the completion of one project but also through the course of other endeavors.

Liaison personnel need to be handpicked for the job. In the same manner as other U.S. national representatives who will visit or come in contact with a host nation, military liaison personnel need training on the origins of the country's people, their culture, their laws, and if at all possible, their language.

Liaison officers need extensive background knowledge on the functioning, organization, and capabilities of the host nation's armed forces as well as on U.S.-host nation agreements and cultural differences. Linguistic training and cultural familiarity will allow them to function at a level that immediately enables them to begin effectively interacting with their host nation counterparts.

The cultural attunement of liaison personnel is critical, but language proficiency cannot be the driving rationale for selecting an individual for this duty. The principle of leadership that requires technical and tactical proficiency remains central to the success of liaison personnel. Interpreters are a second best choice and should be available to augment a liaison team.

INTERPRETERS

A short note about interpreters, though: Language is so intimately tied to culture that the wrong choice of an interpreter can sometimes be more damaging to interpersonal relations than no interpreter at all. For example, a large variety of Hispanic cultures lies beneath the umbrella of the Spanish language, but for various historical and social reasons not all of these cultures are readily acceptable to one another. We must therefore be attuned to the influence of prejudice, a part of the human make-up, and control its effect on our activities. Prudence calls for the decision-maker to consider these matters when choosing an interpreter.

The concept of "time" is another important cultural challenge since it represents perceptual differences in many cultures. The U.S. armed forces are often driven by deadlines and short suspenses. By nature, we seek the immediate resolution of one issue so we can quickly move to the next.

Many nations in the world, however, do not appreciate or share our sense of immediacy. In dealing with the military personnel of other nations, we should keep this in mind as we decide on major milestones or even set schedules for meetings. From the start, planning must not only allow the host nation counterparts the critical time they need but must also help them feel that they are a part of and an influence on any project. Throughout the day-to-day development of a combined project, time must remain a consideration.

On more than one occasion in the past, our enemies have assumed that the United States would not be able to find enough common ground or experience with its allies to engage in successful combined operations. Hitler, for example, reminded his generals in 1944 that they were facing "ultra-capitalist states on one side and ultra-Marxist states on the other," and that one day "this coalition may dissolve."

Coalition can work, though, not only on the strategic level where it is a function of relationships between states but also on the tactical or working level where it is primarily a function of relationships between friends, comrades, and peoples. On this latter level is where bridges are built that span the ever-present international gaps in doctrine, equipment, and culture, and these bridges can lead to the ultimate success desired by all the nations involved.

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